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March 28, 2019

Pete T. Gaynor, Acting Administrator  
Daniel Kaniewski, PhD, Acting Deputy Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Subject: Building a culture of preparedness in the United States

Dear Mr. Gaynor and Mr. Kaniewski,

On March 7, 2018 (over a year ago), I wrote a letter to FEMA on how we could build a culture of preparedness in the United States. I never received any response.

Fast forward to March 1, 2019 and Emergency Management Magazine published an article entitled: "Report: We've Failed Miserably at Preparedness."<sup>1</sup>

The report is FEMA's January 2019 "Building Cultures of preparedness: Report for the Emergency Management Higher Education Community."<sup>2</sup> FEMA's new report states that recent efforts have improved the first responder preparedness and government capabilities, but:

*Attempts to enhance levels of preparedness among individual households, communities, and various organizations which lie outside the emergency management profession's immediate sphere of control have shown little to no sign of improvement.*<sup>3</sup>

Further:

*Preparedness experts state that what is needed is a bottom-up approach, and that past efforts to apply one-size-fits-all solutions have ended in failure.*<sup>4</sup>

The report says that what is needed is a bottom-up approach and that "one-size-fits-all solutions" haven't worked. A year earlier, my letter noted that we have to build the culture of preparedness "from the bottom-up, based on the community's needs."

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<sup>1</sup> Emergency Management Magazine. "Report: We've Failed Miserably at Preparedness." March 1, 2019. <https://www.govtech.com/em/preparedness/Report-Weve-Failed-Miserably-at-Preparedness.html> (accessed March 24, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). 2019. "Building Cultures of Preparedness: A report for the emergency management higher education community." Washington, DC: FEMA. [https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/docs/latest/2019\\_cultures\\_of\\_preparedness\\_report\\_10.22.18%20final.pdf](https://training.fema.gov/hiedu/docs/latest/2019_cultures_of_preparedness_report_10.22.18%20final.pdf) (accessed March 24, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Page 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Page 8.

### ***Maybe it's time FEMA listened to "the bottom"***

I believe I qualify as "the bottom." I am a regular citizen who devotes a substantial amount of my own time (and resources) to writing about and trying to train people in emergency preparedness. I have written a book and maintain a blog about community preparedness and critical infrastructure protection,<sup>5</sup> and I have been giving presentations all over New England about community preparedness.<sup>6</sup> In the coming weeks, I am scheduled to present at four emergency preparedness conferences in New Hampshire and Maine.<sup>7</sup>

In short, I am trying to "build a culture of preparedness" yet only one person from FEMA – a lower level regional employee – has ever reached out to me on their own. Any other correspondence I have had with FEMA, I initiated and the responses I've received – if any – were almost entirely perfunctory.

I can't help but feel that FEMA has neither valued nor supported local efforts at building a culture of preparedness in the past.

### ***We must focus on preparedness for a "worst-case" disaster***

Too many emergency managers think that Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Katrina constitute "worst-case" scenario disasters. They do not. These disasters – as horrible as they were – were best case scenarios. I say this because in Maria and Katrina, outside resources were available and abundant. A "worst-case" scenario disaster would be one where communities were on their own, such as a national-scale loss of the electric grid. In other words, the cavalry is not coming.

If we want to build a culture of preparedness, we need to focus on preparing for a worst-case disaster – which fits perfectly with FEMA strategic plan goal #2.

In my March 7, 2018 letter, I pointed out that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017<sup>8</sup> requires that the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security:

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<sup>5</sup> My blog is located at <https://michaelmabee.info> and my book, "The Civil Defense Book." ISBN-13: 978-1974320943, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition October 17, 2017 is available <https://www.amazon.com/Civil-Defense-Book-Emergency-Preparedness/dp/1974320944> (accessed March 24, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> One of these presentations at New England College is available here: <https://michaelmabee.info/the-cavalry-is-not-coming/> (accessed March 24, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> I have been invited to present "The Cavalry Is Not Coming" at:

- 2019 NH Integrated Emergency Volunteer Training Exercise, Saturday April 6, 2019, Bow, NH. <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07eg4bwjwed5e50dd8&oseq=&c=&ch=> (Accessed March 24, 2019).
- Maine Partners in Emergency Preparedness, April 23, 2019, Augusta, ME. <https://www.maine.gov/mema/maine-prepares/maine-partners-emergency-preparedness-conference> (accessed March 24, 2019).
- 2019 Governor's Conference on Volunteerism, May 20, 2019, Manchester, NH. <http://volunteernh.org/event/2019gc/> (accessed March 24, 2019).
- NH Emergency Preparedness Conference, June 4, 2019, Manchester, NH. <http://www.nhemergencyprepconference.com/home.html> (accessed March 24, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> Public Law 114-328, enacted December 23, 2016. Note: Section 1913. EMP and GMD Planning, Research and Development, and Protection and Preparedness. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-114publ328/pdf/PLAW-114publ328.pdf> (accessed March 7, 2018).

- (1) include in national planning frameworks the threat of an EMP or GMD event; and<sup>9</sup>
- (2) conduct outreach to educate owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners, and emergency response providers at all levels of government regarding threats of EMP and GMD.<sup>10</sup> [Emphasis added.]

On March 26, 2019, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13865 entitled “Executive Order on Coordinating National Resilience to Electromagnetic Pulses”<sup>11</sup> in which FEMA was specifically tasked:

Within 180 days of the date of this order, the Secretary of Homeland Security, through the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the heads of appropriate SSAs, shall review and update Federal response plans, programs, and procedures to account for the effects of EMPs.

Because any national-scale disaster would likely either be caused by or would cause a wide-scale loss of power, it is very logical that we should focus on preparing communities to be able to “rescue themselves” for long periods of time in an environment of a complete loss of power. This is, in fact, an all-hazards approach. Earthquakes, hurricanes and pandemics cause power outages, as well as cyberattacks, EMP, GMD and physical attacks. Most major disasters we have experienced in the past involved the loss of power.

Yet, on May 24, 2018 FEMA admitted that: “Current planning does not include any contingencies for very long term or extremely wide spread power outages.”<sup>12</sup>

I would posit that this is a major reason for our lack of a preparedness culture in the United States today. Unless the people of the United States – and the federal, state and local governments – understand that we face existential threats, it is difficult for them to see the value in preparedness. Perhaps our culture now can be best described as a “somebody will rescue me” culture.

The reasons that we had a better culture of preparedness under the old “civil defense” system are simple. The first aspect is that everybody understood that we faced an existential threat (i.e., global thermonuclear war.) The second aspect is that we trained civilians in what to do and prepared as communities.

Our lack of preparedness came into dramatic focus on January 13, 2018 when residents of Hawaii received this alert:



<sup>9</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 321P (1). Note: the terms “EMP” and “GMD” are defined in 6 U.S.C. § 101.

<sup>10</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 321P (2).

<sup>11</sup> Executive Order 13865, section 5(e)(i): <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-coordinating-national-resilience-electromagnetic-pulses/> (Accessed March 27, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> FEMA. “Private and Public Cyber Security Issues in Rural America.” National Preparedness Symposium, May 24, 2018. <https://training.fema.gov/nationalpreparednesssymposium/assets/2018/2018%20Private%20&%20Public%20Cyber%20Security%20Issues%20in%20Rural%20America.pptx> (accessed March 27, 2019).

What I found most disturbing was the response of a resident as reported by CNN:<sup>13</sup>

*“Clearly, there is a massive gap between letting people know something’s coming and having something for them to do. Nobody knew what to do.”*

Well said.

Besides the fact that there was a catastrophic failure of the emergency alert system which caused widespread panic, this quote says something much deeper and quite painful. “Nobody knew what to do.”

And this message applies to our whole country. We don’t know what to do. The last time I was in a “nuclear attack drill” as a civilian was in the early 70’s when I was in grade school in Ohio. We called these “tornado drills” but they were thinly veiled nuclear attack drills (which did also prepare us for tornados).

As an adult, I have owned houses in three states. Not once has anybody ever rang my bell to talk about emergency preparedness.

As a country, we are unprepared and complacent.

### ***The 2019 Report Reached the Correct Conclusions, But...***

FEMA’s January 2019 report correctly concludes that our past methods have been ineffective and that a “bottom-up” approach is needed, but then notes:

*This report and the workshop upon which it builds represent an effort to contribute to “Building Cultures of Preparedness” by facilitating collaboration and constructive dialogue among academic experts and scholars from diverse disciplines, FEMA officials and practitioners representing a wide range of specialties, all with a shared interest in preparedness and community resilience.<sup>14</sup>*

So, to build a culture or preparedness we need “academic experts and scholars from diverse disciplines” and “FEMA officials and practitioners.” Is there somebody missing here? Oh yeah. The public.

This passage highlights not only why we have failed over the past decade, but why we will continue to fail as long as we limit our efforts to academics and “practitioners.” We know we can’t build a culture or preparedness from a building in DC or from academic discussions alone – yet that appears to be what our solution is. But we are adding a new buzz-word: Culture Broker. Unfortunately, academic study and new buzz word are not going to solve the public engagement problem.

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<sup>13</sup> CNN “Hawaii agency behind false missile alert getting death threats.” January 15, 2018.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/hawaii-agency-behind-false-missile-alert-getting-death-threats/> (accessed March 28, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> FEMA 2019. Page 5.

### ***Nobody Has the Mission.***

In addition to the recommendations in my March 7, 2018 letter – which was written before FEMA’s Strategic Plan was released<sup>15</sup> and is attached here for reference – I also note that a major problem remains that nobody has “the mission” to build a culture of preparedness in a particular community. If we want this to happen, this has to be clearly on somebody’s radar as their responsibility. Right now, in 35,000 towns and cities across the U.S., this “mission” is on very few people’s radar as their primary (or at least a major) responsibility. Do our academics think that these so-called “culture brokers” are just going to spontaneously appear?

To whom should this responsibility fall? One thing in common in every one of the 35,000 towns and cities in the country (as well as many large corporations and government agencies) is an emergency manager. Building a culture of preparedness needs to be a function – and mission – of emergency management. (You may think it already is, but I assure you in most communities, it is not).

FEMA defines emergency management as:

Definition: Emergency management is the managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters.

Vision: Emergency management seeks to promote safer, less vulnerable communities with the capacity to cope with hazards and disasters.

Mission: Emergency Management protects communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

I propose that FEMA modify the mission of emergency management:

Mission: Emergency Management builds a culture of preparedness by involving all stakeholders including citizens, organizations, businesses and the government in all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.

### ***FEMA Must Take Action to Facilitate Building A Culture of Preparedness***

I refer you back to my March 7, 2018 letter and recommendations. We are still waiting. Of paramount importance, FEMA needs to tell us that starting a local civil defense program (either non-profit or government sponsored organization) is a good idea. Even better, tell us that it is what we should do. Communities are literally waiting for this guidance.

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<sup>15</sup> Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. Released March 15, 2018.

<https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2018/03/15/fema-releases-2018-2022-strategic-plan> (accessed March 24, 2019).

I have had countless conversations with people after FEMA's strategic plan came out and for most, it remains FEMA's strategic plan – not the nation's plan. Many emergency managers are waiting for FEMA to tell them what to do (i.e., they are waiting for the “mission”). Many are also waiting for “resources” which they believe are necessary to “build a culture of preparedness.” Let me address both issues.

Mission: FEMA needs to clearly give every emergency manager – public and private sector – the mission to:

- 1) Build a Culture of Preparedness, and
- 2) Ready the Nation for Catastrophic Disasters.

FEMA can do neither of these things alone – they must be done from the bottom-up. And this has to be clearly on the radar of every emergency manager that this is their mission – getting into living rooms, not simply putting together great looking binders of plans.

Resources: While the third point in FEMA's strategic plan (“Reduce the Complexity of FEMA”) can be of great assistance here, we need to emphasize to emergency managers that they cannot wait for resources – they must take action now. In most cases, the resources they need already exist in the community.

I tell emergency managers this: imagine if you woke up this morning and there was a non-profit civil defense organization in your community. The group's mission statement:

*The mission of the [your town's name] Civil Defense Corp. is to educate and promote individual, family, and town preparedness for disasters; to provide disaster assistance and relief to town residents in the event of a disaster; and to educate and provide planning and resource options to the town for preparation and response to a “worst-case,” long-term catastrophe affecting the town.*

In this organization there are subgroups working on key aspects of the town's survival in case of a long-term catastrophe, such as:

- A subgroup of EMTs, paramedics, doctors and nurses stocking supplies, equipment and planning for how medical services could be delivered in a worst-case scenario.
- A subgroup of HAM radio operators and engineers working on ways for the town to communicate internally and externally.
- A subgroup working to stock and produce food for the community, as well as educating the public on ways to be more food independent.
- A subgroup working on methods to ensure that potable water is available and safe in a disaster.
- A subgroup working on methods of providing alternative power for critical facilities and services.
- A security subgroup working with the local police department to provide resources and man-power.
- A safety, health, and sanitation subgroup working to prevent disease and injury as sanitation services are interrupted and people are forced to do non-traditional tasks to survive.
- An outreach subgroup focused on training and education – teaching the public preparedness, homesteading skills and self-reliance.
- A finance subgroup soliciting donations, grants and organizing activities to fund the civil defense program.

And other subgroups based on your particular community's needs. What a resource multiplier! With a civil defense organization like this, your community is moving rapidly towards a true culture of preparedness and true pre-disaster mitigation.

Of course, you didn't really wake up—this is just a vivid dream. But if we are men and women of action, we can turn this dream into reality for our communities.

### *Conclusion*

In my March 7, 2018 letter, I outlined key concepts for bringing back civil defense as a means of building a culture of preparedness in the United States. A year has passed with little progress, but we now have a great opportunity with the March 26, 2019 Executive Order (EO 13865) to increase our nation's resilience. I hope we can start making progress and not waste another year – and possibly risk many lives.

We need FEMA to act with a sense of urgency if we want the nation to adopt the same sense of urgency.

I would be happy to meet with you to further discuss how we can build a true culture of preparedness in the U.S.

Sincerely,



Michael Mabee

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March 7, 2018

William B. “Brock” Long, Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Goals:           1. Building a culture of preparedness in the United States  
                      2. Bringing back “civil defense” and local pre-disaster mitigation

Dear Mr. Long,

Both of these goals are interrelated, and achievable. The purpose of this letter is to offer you a way forward to achieve them. I am a national expert on preparedness and for years have been advocating a return to local civil defense. It has been refreshing to hear you speak to Congress and the media about civil defense, local pre-disaster mitigation and the need to build a culture of preparedness in the United States.

First, here are the two things that we are doing that haven’t worked.

### ***1. Nobody has ever heard of Citizen Corps.***

Try this: Ask the next 10 citizens you meet on the street “do you know what Citizen Corps is?” They don’t know. The few who might attempt to answer will confuse Citizen Corps with the Peace Corps.

Our attempt since 9/11/2001 to engage citizens on community preparedness has been a dismal failure. The failure is partly due to the fact that this has been a top-down approach – from FEMA to the citizens, John and Jane Smith. Yet, the Smiths have never heard of Citizen Corps and after 16 ½ years, we have not been able to reach them with our message. The Smiths in 2018 are still complacent and unprepared.

The only reason that I know about Citizen Corps is because I ran into it when I was researching community preparedness for the book I was writing. To the extent that anybody thinks that Citizen Corps is making our communities more prepared, it is not. A bureaucracy like Citizen Corps is not what we need to reach people.<sup>1</sup> (If people don’t know what it is and can’t understand it, it is not going to work.) If we want to reach people, we need to change our paradigm to a bottom-up, grassroots approach to preparedness.

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<sup>1</sup> In fact the, the program is so unloved, even by FEMA, that today while going to the Citizen Corps website, I received the error message that [www.citizencorps.fema.gov](http://www.citizencorps.fema.gov)’s “security certificate expired 216 days ago.” When I proceeded on the website anyway (“not recommended”), there is a message that “a new website is coming soon.”

## 2. *The flaw of the emergency management system.*

Our emergency management system has actually *contributed* to our lack of a culture of preparedness – not through lack of effort or dedication, but through a basic design flaw. We are not ready for a “worst case scenario” because we always rely on outside resources. In other words, somebody is going to rescue us. In this context, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Maria were actually “best-case scenarios” because in both cases, they were “regional” events where massive outside resources were available.<sup>2</sup>

Because of emergency management’s design – specifically, the ability to expand (or “scale up”) when the scope of the disaster overwhelms local resources, emergency managers are wired to rely on the availability of outside resources for anything bigger than usual. This is literally a tenet of their thinking. (No matter how bad it is, resources will always be available from “above” our level and we can always “scale up”.)

There are 35,000 towns and cities in the United States. If a cyber-attack or a geomagnetic disturbance (GMD) took down the electric grid nationwide, right now we would have 35,000 towns and cities looking to their states and FEMA for resources. They would not be looking internally at their own civil defense plan because they don’t have one. This is what we need to fix.

The stakes are dangerously high. On March 28, 2017 the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs reported this about the critical infrastructure:

“The United States depends on its critical infrastructure, particularly the electric power grid, as all critical infrastructure sectors are to some degree dependent on electricity to operate. A successful nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack against the United States could cause the death of approximately 90 percent of the American population. Similarly, a geomagnetic disturbance (GMD) could have equally devastating effects on the power grid.”<sup>3</sup>

Something needs to get the attention of the 35,000 cities and towns so that they see the need to be prepared to be on their own for an extended period of time – and not, as is the case now, always put their hope on the cavalry’s arrival.

### ***What Does Work?***

Let’s back up and look at what does work. Every community in the U.S. has a fire department and has emergency medical services. In most communities, these are volunteer organizations.<sup>4</sup> Communities are not “required” by the federal government to have these services – the communities feel that they need these services, so over the years they made sure that, in some way, they had them. Some of these

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<sup>2</sup> “Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Maria were both “best case scenarios.” October 21, 2017.

<https://michaelmabee.info/best-case-scenarios/> (accessed March 7, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Senate Report 115-12. Activities of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. (115th Congress) March 28, 2017. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-115srpt12/pdf/CRPT-115srpt12.pdf> (accessed March 6, 2018). Page 6.

<sup>4</sup> According to FEMA’s website, 70.8% of the fire departments in the U.S. are volunteer organizations. See: <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/registry/summary/> (accessed march 5, 2018). According to USA.gov, one-third of the States indicated that the majority of EMS agencies that respond to 911 emergencies with transport capability are considered to be volunteer agencies. See: [https://www.ems.gov/pdf/National\\_EMS\\_Assessment\\_Demographics\\_2011.pdf](https://www.ems.gov/pdf/National_EMS_Assessment_Demographics_2011.pdf) (accessed March 5, 2018).

are set up as non-profit organizations. Some are set up as governmental organizations. There is no one size fits all; rather, each community has developed a system and resources that worked for them. They may have been able to get grants to assist them with buying equipment, or for training, but ultimately, the people in the community did the work to develop the system. Nobody in DC set it up for them.

A local civil defense organization needs to be developed the same way – from the bottom-up, based on the community’s needs. It can be a non-profit or a governmental organization. But the community needs to see that they need it and have some support in organizing and setting it up. This should be FEMA’s role – providing the leadership, and then the support for the locally executed efforts.

In most places, the cost to get a lawyer or accountant to draft and file the papers to start a non-profit organization is under \$1000. This is an incredible pre-disaster mitigation investment with a potential for massive return. If we can help communities to do this, it would likely be the best possible use of pre-disaster mitigation funds.

As you testified to Congress on November 30, 2017 “it is important to point out that an optimal response and recovery process should be federally supported, state managed and locally executed.”<sup>5</sup> I would also point out, that this should apply to pre-disaster mitigation – e.g., civil defense – as well.

So how do we get the communities to want to set up a local civil defense organization?

### ***Getting our communities to see the need for civil defense.***

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017<sup>6</sup> requires that the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security:

- (1) include in national planning frameworks the threat of an EMP or GMD event; and<sup>7</sup>
- (2) conduct outreach to educate owners and operators of critical infrastructure, emergency planners, and emergency response providers at all levels of government regarding threats of EMP and GMD.<sup>8</sup> [Emphasis added.]

This new law gives us the authority and obligation to educate our local communities about the need for civil defense. FEMA should develop a community-level EMP/GMD local tabletop exercise (TTX). The purpose of this exercise is for the local government to see what would happen if their community was on its own for months or longer after a catastrophic failure of the national electric grid. No outside resources will be available to the town – what they have is what they have. This will prove very eye-opening for the majority of communities.

This exercise is purposely designed to “fail” (because through failure, comes learning). It is designed to teach the local government, emergency managers, and citizens what would happen as time went on during a long-term outage. In order for communities to plan meaningful pre-disaster mitigation, they have to see the “reality” in the TTX of the horrible loss of life their community would encounter if

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<sup>5</sup> “FEMA Administrator Brock Long: Time to hit the reset button on resiliency.” December 9, 2017. <https://michaelmabee.info/fema-administrator-brock-long-resilient/> (accessed March 7, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Public Law 114-328, enacted December 23, 2016. Note: Section 1913. EMP and GMD Planning, Research and Development, and Protection and Preparedness. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-114publ328/pdf/PLAW-114publ328.pdf> (accessed March 7, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 321P (1). Note: the terms “EMP” and “GMD” are defined in 6 U.S.C. § 101.

<sup>8</sup> 6 U.S.C. § 321P (2).

they were unprepared. By thinking about the long term effects of a loss of the critical infrastructures during the TTX, the community will “experience” starvation, disease, collapse of their local medical system (if their community even had one), inability to protect citizens from crime and, ultimately, good people doing bad things as we saw in Katrina, Andrew and the 1977 New York blackout.

After going through this exercise, it will be very clear to each community what would happen. The question then becomes, what can we do to mitigate ahead of time? Building a civil defense organization is the answer. It is a resource multiplier for the community. It is the only logical conclusion.

And in preparing for a “worst case” disaster, the community is preparing to be more self-reliant in any scale disaster. There is no downside to preparing for the worst.

Meanwhile, FEMA should develop a similar “worst-case” EMP/GMD TTX for the state and federal level which will reveal the problems the higher levels will face. For example, there are 99 nuclear reactors in 30 U.S. states – and they all have only a limited quantity of back up fuel for their generators. What is the plan to cool the spent fuel rods after 3 months and 6 months?<sup>9</sup> Another example, federal and state employees will stop showing up to work if they feel their families are endangered, so the resources we think we have may not be there.

The 6 U.S.C. § 321P (national planning and education) TTX is necessary if we are to have stronger and more resilient communities – as well as collectively become more resilient as a country. Presently few, if any, would argue that the United States is prepared for a long term EMP or GMD grid outage. The vast majority of our communities and local governments have never even thought about it.

I believe that your vision of having a preparedness culture in the United States is achievable. It is not only achievable, but it is necessary for the safety of our communities and the national security of our country.

The only thing stopping most communities, local governments and local emergency managers from starting or supporting local civil defense organizations is that they don’t know that they should. Everybody is waiting for FEMA to tell us what we should do.

### ***Recommendations.***

We can vastly improve local level pre-disaster mitigation and lead the nation towards a true culture of preparedness by doing the following:

1. FEMA needs to tell us that starting a local civil defense program (either non-profit<sup>10</sup> or government sponsored organization) is a good idea. Even better, tell us that it is what *we should do*. Communities are literally waiting for this guidance.
2. I have attached a proposed bi-partisan Congressional resolution (H. Res. 762) which contains language which is very useful. It would be of great educational value and assistance to local

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<sup>9</sup> Power Mag: “NRC Grants Citizen Petition to Examine Solar Storms.” <http://www.powermag.com/nrc-grants-citizen-petition-to-examine-solar-storms/> (accessed March 7, 2018)

<sup>10</sup> USA.gov: “Starting a Nonprofit Organization” <https://www.usa.gov/start-nonprofit> (accessed March 5, 2018).

governments to see something like this from Congress – or at least as a statement to this effect from FEMA. Although this resolution never made it out of committee, a good idea does not need to pass Congress to be a good idea. Encouraging communities to develop their own “civil defense” program is just a good idea.

3. FEMA should create a local EMP/GMD TTX scenario with the goal of teaching communities what could happen in a worst case national scale emergency in accordance with 6 U.S.C. § 321P(1) and (2).
4. FEMA should create a state and national level EMP/GMD TTX scenario with the goal of informing higher levels of government what could happen in a worst case national scale emergency in accordance with 6 U.S.C. § 321P(1) and (2).
5. As you mentioned in your November 30, 2017 testimony to Congress, we need to partner with the Department of Education to start the preparedness culture with our children. This needs to be implemented at a local level – civil defense subjects for students should be taught, including survival skills, first aid, etc.
6. Citizen Corps should be replaced by a simple structure to support building local civil defense organizations. (As streamlined and unbureaucratic as possible.) This support structure should help communities start an organization, apply for grants and support their efforts.

The Secure the Grid Coalition<sup>11</sup> and InfraGard<sup>12</sup> are two groups FEMA could partner with. They have many experts and large quantities of research materials available on EMP, GMD as well as other electric grid threats and security. These groups may be of assistance in developing the 6 U.S.C. § 321P TTXs.

I would be happy to meet with you to further discuss how we can build a true culture of preparedness in the U.S.

Sincerely,



Michael Mabee

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<sup>11</sup> Secure the Grid Coalition. <https://securethegrid.com/> (accessed March 5, 2018)

<sup>12</sup> InfraGard. <https://www.infragard.org/> (accessed March 5, 2018).

112<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 762

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding community-based civil defense and power generation.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 2, 2012

Mr. BARTLETT (for himself, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Ms. CLARKE of New York, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding community-based civil defense and power generation.

Whereas the United States has become increasingly more dependent on electronic delivery systems to power daily needs and provide for the common defense;

Whereas these systems would be rendered useless or their functions significantly reduced in the event of a “high impact low-frequency” event such as a cyber attack, coordinated physical attack on electric grid and communications assets, or the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) effects of either a 100-year solar storm or high-altitude nuclear burst;

Whereas the 2010 North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) report, “High-Impact Low-Frequency Vulnerabilities to the Bulk American Power System”, discusses the wide range of threats that could disrupt, damage, or destroy sufficient amounts of the power grids to cause widespread death and economic disruption;

Whereas the January 2010 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) report, “Electromagnetic Pulse: Effects on the U.S. Power Grid”, provides detail into the vulnerability of power grids from the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) effects of extreme space weather and high-altitude nuclear effects and intentional electromagnetic interference;

Whereas the Congressional EMP Commission reports of 2004 and 2008 outline the interdependent nature of all critical infrastructure, especially to power and telecommunications and their vulnerability to the EMP effects of extreme space weather and high-altitude nuclear bursts;

Whereas the National Defense University hosted a series of workshops and an energy security exercise in October 2011 with broad participation of Federal, State, local government, and the private sector highlighting the need for greater local sustainability in light of a prolonged nationwide power loss;

Whereas the Hoover-Brookings joint report on distributed power shows that the value of local power generation for security applications is either cost competitive or approaching competitiveness as new innovations come to market;

Whereas, on March 30, 2012, the United States Department of Homeland Security published the “National Prepared-

ness Report” (Report) seeking to create “an all-of-nation” approach to preparedness;

Whereas the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was assigned as the National Preparedness Report Coordinator, “Efforts to improve national preparedness have incorporated the whole community, which includes individuals, communities, the private and nonprofit sectors, faith-based organizations, and Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial governments.”;

Whereas the “National Preparedness Report” focuses on a catastrophic planning framework known as “Maximums of Maximums”, which centers on collaborative, whole community planning for worst-case scenarios that exceed government capabilities and therefore focus on more local and individual efforts for survival and recovery;

Whereas these high-impact, low-frequency events would cause regional or nationwide collapse of critical infrastructure that could last months or longer, it is incumbent on the Federal Government to reassess its civilian civil defense strategies to include local governments and individual citizens; and

Whereas it is in the interest of national security and local community viability that every community and institution begin to reestablish its ability to generate at least 20 percent of its own power for its critical infrastructure and services in order to provide its citizens with food and water: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2            (1) encourages every community to develop its  
3            own “civil defense program” working with citizens,  
4            leaders, and institutions ranging from local fire

1 halls, schools, and faith-based organizations, to cre-  
2 ate sustainable local infrastructure and planning ca-  
3 pacity so that it might mitigate high-impact sce-  
4 narios and be better prepared to survive and recover  
5 from these worst-case disaster scenarios and be bet-  
6 ter able to affordably and sustainably meet the  
7 needs of the community in times of peace and tran-  
8 quility;

9 (2) encourages every citizen to develop an indi-  
10 vidual emergency plan to prepare for the absence of  
11 government assistance for extended periods;

12 (3) encourages each local community to foster  
13 the capability of providing at least 20 percent of its  
14 own critical needs such as local power generation,  
15 food, and water, while protecting local infrastructure  
16 whenever possible from the threats that threaten  
17 centralized infrastructure, and do so with the ur-  
18 gency and importance inherent in an all-of-nation  
19 civil defense program developed by citizens and their  
20 local communities; and

21 (4) encourages State governments and Federal  
22 agencies to support the ability of local communities  
23 to become stronger, self-reliant, and better able to

- 1 assist neighboring communities in times of great
- 2 need.

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